ED 097163

AN INTRODUCTION TO

THE ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

AND INFORMATION ON

PEOPLE
GOVERNMENT
HISTORY
GEOGRAPHY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
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RECEIVED
OCT 29 1974

Prepared by the
Office of Public Information & Publications
Alaska Department of Education
Pouch F, Juneau, Alaska 99801

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March 1973

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RC 008 191

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The Alaska Department of Education receives many requests each year for general information about Alaska. Many of these requests come from students and educators of the other states. In addition, many requests come from parents who plan to move to Alaska and wish to know what schools are available for their children. This booklet has been prepared to provide this information, and shall be revised periodically to keep it up to date.

ALASKA EDUCATION SYSTEM

DISTRICT SCHOOLS

Alaska's public school system is composed of District schools and State-Operated schools. District schools are located within cities and boroughs. All have their own school boards and operate in much the same manner as school districts in cities and counties of the other states. The 29 school districts vary in size from 40 pupils with 4 teachers to 34,000 pupils and 1,500 teachers.

Usually the school year commences on the day following Labor Day and the school year, excluding legal holidays, is 180 days. For primary children the school day, according to law, shall not be less than 4 hours, exclusive of intermission. Entrance to kindergarten is at 5 years of age before November 2, and to the first grade at 6 years of age before November 2. Attendance at school is compulsory for all children between the ages of 7 and 16 who live within 2 miles of a school or a school bus route. Children under school age may be enrolled under certain conditions.

In order to graduate from high school a pupil must earn a minimum of 16 units of credit during the 4 years. Subjects required of all pupils graduating from an approved Alaska high school include: English, mathematics, science, world history, U. S. history, physical education and American government.

The Alaska course of study is a broad framework around which schools build their instructional program. The methods and techniques of teaching and subject content are adjusted to meet the educational needs of local situations. All teaching is in English except in some rural schools where there are bilingual education programs which use the native language as well as English. Special attention is given to children with language handicaps. There is no differentiation in the schools because of race.

Information concerning schools within a particular borough or city may be obtained by writing to the district superintendent.

Anchorage Borough Schools
670 Fireweed Lane
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Barrow North Slope Borough
School District
Box 566
Barrow, Alaska 99723

Bristol Bay Borough Schools
P. O. Box 527
Naknek, Alaska 99633

Cordova City Schools
P. O. Box 140
Cordova, Alaska 99574

Craig City Schools
P. O. Box 166
Craig, Alaska 99921

Dillingham City Schools
P. O. Box 202
Dillingham, Alaska 99576

Fairbanks-North Star Borough Schools
P. O. Box 1250
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Haines Borough Schools
P. O. Box 251
Haines, Alaska 99827

Hoonah City Schools
P. O. Box 8
Hoonah, Alaska 99829

Hydaburg City Schools
Hydaburg, Alaska 99922

Juneau Borough Schools
1250 Glacier Avenue
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Kake City Schools
P. O. Box 457
Kake, Alaska 99830

Kenai Peninsula Borough Schools
P. O. Box 1266
Soldotna, Alaska 99669

Ketchikan Gateway Borough Schools
P. O. Box 2550
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

King Cove City Schools
King Cove, Alaska 99612

Klawock City Schools
Klawock, Alaska 99925

Kodiak Island Borough Schools
P. O. Box 886
Kodiak, Alaska 99615

Matanuska-Susitna Borough Schools
P. O. Box AB
Palmer, Alaska 99645

Nenana City Schools
P. O. Box 127
Nenana, Alaska 99760

Nome City Schools
P. O. Box 131
Nome, Alaska 99762

Pelican City Schools
P. O. Box 732
Pelican, Alaska 99832

Petersburg City Schools
P. O. Box 289
Petersburg, Alaska 99833

St. Mary's Public Schools
P. O. Box 71
St. Mary's, Alaska 99658

Sitka Borough Schools
P. O. Box 179
Sitka, Alaska 99835

Skagway City Schools
P. O. Box 497
Skagway, Alaska 99840

Unalaska City Schools
Unalaska, Alaska 99685

Valdez City Schools
P. O. Box 526
Valdez, Alaska 99686

Wrangell City Schools
P. O. Box 651
Wrangell, Alaska 99929

Yakutat City Schools
P. O. Box 227
Yakutat, Alaska 99689

STATE-OPERATED SCHOOLS

Public schools located outside of the organized cities and boroughs are administered by the Alaska State-Operated School System. The System includes on-base schools, located on the six Alaska military bases, and rural schools, found in small communities and isolated villages across the state. There are a total of 18,000 students enrolled in these schools. The administrative offices for State-operated schools are located in Anchorage.

On-Base Schools

Over 10,000 children are enrolled in 24 on-base schools with a professional staff of 510. Schools on all six bases range from kindergarten through the junior high school level. There are two on-base schools offering full high school programs of academic and vocational subjects. Students are children of military personnel stationed in Alaska. Facilities are comparable to those found on military bases in "the Lower 48." Building enrollments range from 250 students to nearly 900.

Rural Schools

Most of Alaska's 125 rural schools are elementary (K-8) schools, although a few also have high school programs. Over 30 are one-teacher schools with students of all grades combined into one class; 37 are two-teacher schools. Other schools have from 3 to 90 teachers. Four hundred and eighty teachers for both general and special education work with nearly 8,000 students from Annette Island near the Canadian border to the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands near the International Dateline. Rural school students are primarily Alaska Natives—Indian, Aleuts, and Eskimos. School buildings in the larger communities compare favorably with the new school construction in other states. However, in smaller villages, the schools are usually quite small. There are still a few log buildings in use in some outlying communities.

The problems of operating schools in isolated, sparsely populated areas are immense. Better communications via radio systems and telephones are continually being developed. Many State, local, and private educational agencies are developing curriculum materials relevant to the lives of Alaska's Native school children. Alaska has few connecting roads. Transportation is by boat and plane in the Southeast; in the North and West Alaskans travel by plane, snowmobile and dog sled in winter

and by boat and plane in summer. To counteract geographical isolation, the State-Operated Schools' Instructional Materials Center was developed to provide even the very remote schools with the most modern and the most culturally appropriate instructional aids.

Eleven State-operated rural schools presently offer a high school curriculum: Bethel, Delta Junction, Fort Yukon, Glennallen, McGrath, Metlakatla, Tanana, Thorne Bay, Tok, Gustavus, and Healy–Tri-Valley. The State is striving to develop and initiate high school programs specifically designed for small isolated communities. As Alaska's school programs grow, students will be able to complete up to 4 years of secondary education in their own locality as an option to leaving their homes to attend one of the boarding high school programs.

BOARDING HIGH SCHOOLS

Regional high schools are large complexes, consisting of academic and vocational buildings, cafeteria and dormitory facilities for 150 to 500 students. There are three such schools in Alaska. The first, the William E. Beltz Boarding High School in Nome was built in 1966. The second, in Kodiak, was completed in 1970, and in 1972 the Bethel Regional High School was opened. All regional schools offer a comprehensive secondary curriculum, including college preparatory courses, extensive vocational programs, and bi-cultural programs designed to meet the needs of boarding students.

Alaska is continuing to develop a statewide system of area high schools. Area high schools are smaller local high schools which have been expanded by providing multi-purpose rooms and general high school classrooms. Students in nearby villages can attend these area high schools, living in homes and boarding cottages in the community. The scope of the curriculum is more limited than the offerings of the large regional high schools, but all area high schools give a general academic program of high quality, leading to a high school diploma.

As rural education facilities develop in the state, local village high schools and area high schools will be located throughout rural Alaska and will serve students living in communities where secondary schools are not presently available.

Boarding Home Program

The Boarding Home Program was conceived in 1966 to serve the overflow of students that could not get into State-operated or BIA boarding schools. Under this program, students board in private homes in urban centers and attend the local high school. Enrollment in this program has grown from 110 students in 1967 to over 1,000 during the 1972 school year.

The Boarding Home Program will continue to expand until the potential small local high school programs are completed. The Boarding Home Program will provide the needed spaces and flexibility until this can be achieved.

As the number of local high schools increases, the Boarding Home Program will be limited to students requiring special programs. These would include, for example, students desiring to study a specific subject in depth which might be offered only in

a particular school district, students with special medical or social problems, and students with other special needs as determined by their local education advisory committee.

Because boarding home students increase the enrollments of the local high school, the school is able to increase its specialized faculty and offer a more varied curriculum. The students' social skills in a modern community are improved through daily contact with actual civic, cultural, and business environments. The child often lives with one or two other boarding students who share his social or familial background; however, he receives individual attention from the boarding home parents and their children.

CORRESPONDENCE STUDY

Correspondence study courses are provided by the State and school districts for children of legal school age who reside in areas where a regular school is not maintained or where they are outside the limits of a school bus route. Department of Education home study courses have been developed for grades kindergarten through eight around textbooks used in Alaska schools. Study courses are circulated by mail, and a team of five certified teachers correct the elementary correspondence study test lessons and provide assistance to correspondence study pupils and to their home teachers. Books, filmstrips, and other instructional aids are mailed to students from the Alaska State Library.

The Department of Education purchases high school correspondence study courses through the University of Nebraska for pupils who reside in remote areas and who, for various reasons, do not wish to take advantage of the boarding home program. Correspondence courses are also available for adults.

ADULT EDUCATION

Alaska is in particular need of imaginative programs for its adults, especially for those in the remote areas. Adult vocational education courses, such as office occupations training, merchandising training, logging and sawmill training, and garment construction programs offered by the Department of Education (often in conjunction with the BIA) increase employment opportunities in the communities as well as increase the employability of the trainees.

Adult Basic Education programs are designed to help adults earn an 8th grade diploma. In 1972, 109 teachers in 85 adult programs gave instruction in basic communication skills to more than 2,000 adults in Alaska. Through Adult Basic Education programs, adults are given a second chance to reach their potentials. A fuller, more rewarding life, better and more interesting and challenging jobs are the goal of many adult participants.

Over two thousand adults in Alaska who did not finish high school received high school diplomas by examination in 1972 through the High School Equivalency Testing Program supervised by the Department of Education. Adults may obtain the equivalent of a high school diploma from the State by taking a series of tests which cover basic high school curriculum skills. Many areas in Alaska offer adult courses to help individuals prepare for the examination. These are generally given through community colleges or through local civic groups. Adults living in remote areas may obtain correspondence study courses from the Department of Education to prepare them for their examinations.

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Bureau of Indian Affairs operates education programs in 50 villages, in 2 Alaska boarding schools, and in several schools outside of the State. The Bureau cooperates closely with the State to make sure that prescribed standards of education are met.

Qualified teachers and approved curriculum are provided for approximately 5,000 students. About two-thirds of the schools are of one and two classrooms located in remote, isolated villages where the state of Alaska at this time is not financially able to operate schools. Most schools offer a balanced curriculum through the eighth grade.

The four largest schools—Barrow, Kotzebue, Hooper Bay, and Nunapitchuk—now provide strong junior high school programs. In addition, the BIA operates a boarding school where nearly 500 students who have no opportunities to attend high school in their home community are enrolled each year. The schools provide regular academic junior high and high school offerings with State and regionally approved curriculums.

Information concerning employment in Bureau of Indian Affairs schools may be obtained by writing to the Personnel Officer, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Box 3-8000, Juneau, Alaska 99801.

INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

The University of Alaska in College, four miles from Fairbanks, and the Alaska Methodist University in Anchorage are fully accredited institutions of higher learning. Complete programs of graduate and undergraduate studies are offered in many fields. Sheldon Jackson Junior College is a Presbyterian junior college located at Sitka.

Community colleges, affiliated with the University of Alaska, are located in Juneau, Ketchikan, Kenai, Kodiak, Palmer, Sitka, Bethel, and Anchorage.

For information on teaching positions, course schedules, eligibility requirements, scholarships and loans, and applications to Alaska's universities and community colleges, write directly to the institution of your interest. The addresses are listed below.

University of Alaska
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Alaska Methodist University
University Boulevard
Anchorage, Alaska 99504

Sheldon Jackson Junior College
P. O. Box 479
Sitka, Alaska 99835

Anchorage Community College
2533 Providence Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99504

Kenai Community College
Box 539
Kenai, Alaska 99611

Kodiak Community College
Box 954
Kodiak, Alaska 99615

Matanuska-Susitna Community College
Box 86
Palmer, Alaska 99645

Juneau-Douglas Community College
P. O. Box 135
Auke Bay, Alaska 99821

Ketchikan Community College
Box 358
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

Kuskokwim Community College
Box 581
Bethel, Alaska 99559

Sitka Community College
P. O. Box 1090
Sitka, Alaska 99835

TEACHERS

There are teachers in Alaska from every state in the Union. The teachers employed in Alaska are well qualified and must be certified.

For information on teaching positions in any of Alaska's district schools, write to the superintendent of the individual districts listed on page 2. For employment information on State-operated schools, write to the Placement Supervisor, State-Operated School System, 650 International Airport Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99502.

PROGRAMS TO MEET ALASKA'S NEEDS

Alaskan educators have devoted much time to developing curriculum materials specifically for Alaskan rural school children. Traditional textbooks, written for metropolitan schools in "the Lower 48" may be interesting to children in Sacramento and Baltimore, but they confuse and, in fact, frustrate Alaskan school children.

An Eskimo child finds it hard to understand why Dick and Jane get into an automobile or train and go to visit grandmother who lives several hundred miles away. In her village, it is customary for a family, including the grandmother, to live together.

A small boy living 250 miles up the Kuskokwim River in western Alaska has never seen a policeman. Since he has always wandered around the village by himself, he cannot understand the book he is learning to read which says that Dick needs a policeman to help him cross the street.

Many Alaskan school children live in areas isolated most of the year except by air. The mail plane drops letters once a month, and an occasional chartered flight may land on the beach nearby. Children live in a comfortable one- or two-room house which they share with their entire family. They have many brothers and sisters and have very close family and village ties. They have already learned more about the animals and the elements in their area than children in Anchorage or Abilene will ever know. Learning that seals shot in the summertime sink, and in the wintertime, float, is much more important to them than learning the meaning of traffic signals.

When children in Alaskan villages begin to learn to read, they are confused by the things Dick and Jane do in their readers. Because the importance of the textbook materials is questionable to them, the importance of learning is also vague. As a result, teachers end up "explaining half the American culture" before they can begin to help their students learn to read.

In 1968, first graders in many villages began using *Alaskan Readers* to make learning to read easier. The readers, developed by the Alaska Rural Schools Project and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, are based on settings and events familiar to Alaskan children. They are illustrated with realistic line drawings of Eskimo children, sled dogs, and scenes typical of Arctic life.

Curriculum materials are being developed for many subjects. Village school teachers have established modern math texts geared to the needs of Alaska's rural children. Natural history, art, and social studies materials are being rewritten to "make sense" to young Alaskans.

Another curriculum committee recently planned a course outline for social science for secondary students. The new course of studies will include natural history and economics, as well as music, art, and language for 9th and 10th grade students from the sub-Arctic and Arctic regions.

A high school science course for native Alaskan students was developed in Nome, Alaska. The course introduces complex scientific principles by means of concepts and activities familiar to Eskimo students in the area. The subjects introduced in science class are talked about, written up, and studied in other classes such as English, home economics, and speech.

A major consideration in developing culturally appropriate school programs is the training of classroom teachers. The University of Alaska, through the Rural School Project, offers training to teachers new to the state. Instruction includes methods of teaching English to bilinguals, courses in anthropology and Alaska history, and consideration of special problems in Alaskan education.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Recent legislation has provided State-operated schools with the funds to expand their bilingual education programs. State-operated schools having at least 15 students whose primary language is other than English are now required to have at least one teacher who is fluent in the native language of the area. Written materials and other educational matter must also be presented in the native language.

THE LAND

Alaska is big. With one-fifth of the land mass of the United States, it could hold Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona and Nevada combined. It has the highest peaks on the continent in six major mountain ranges. (Mt. McKinley, in the Alaska Range, is 20,320 feet high). Its seacoast is longer than the Atlantic and Pacific seaboards combined. It has three million lakes of more than 20 acres, 10,000 rivers and streams, and 6 rivers over 400 miles long. Juneau, the capital, is almost as far from Point Barrow as Seattle is from the Mexican border, and is farther from Dutch Harbor in the Aleutians than New York is from San Francisco.

Alaska is in some ways entirely unique, and in other ways almost as diverse as the North American continent itself. There are deserts, great plains, swamps, forests, glaciers, ice fields, fjords, huge river systems, active volcanoes, thousands of islands, broad valleys.

Alaska's weather is as varied as its topography; visitors to interior Alaska find principally an arid climate with extreme ranges of temperature ranging from the 90's in the summer to the -50's in the winter. Southeastern and coastal areas of Alaska are characterized by a wet coastal climate with moderate temperatures caused by the warm Japanese current curving up from the Pacific and along the Alaskan coast. The Japanese current provides many Alaskans with a more comfortable year-round climate, cooler summers and warmer winters, than found in many of the cities of the northeast and midwest United States or in the northern Rocky Mountains.

Only in the Far North above the Arctic Circle are found the climatic conditions often attributed to the entire state. Even then, these conditions are evident primarily in winter.

GLACIERS

The sparkling rivers of blue ice, called glaciers, are a feature for which Alaska is well-known. They add much to the beauty and fascination of Alaska's Pacific Coastal regions. Strange as it may seem, glaciers are not associated with extremely cold climatic conditions. Practically all of Alaska's glaciers are located south of the Arctic Circle. Interior and northern Alaska, which are much drier and, in winter, colder than the coastal area, have very few glaciers.

Glaciers form where continuous warm, moisture-laden winds and clouds exist at elevations high enough to result in precipitation in the form of snow, and where the summer is too short and cool to melt the previous winter's snowfall. These great masses of snow, under pressure, turn gradually to ice, fill the valleys between the mountains, and flow downhill as do the rivers, only more slowly.

Alaska has more square miles of glaciers than the rest of the inhabited world. They cover over 3 percent of the state, or about 20,000 square miles, which is greater than the area of Switzerland (15,941 square miles). Some of Alaska's glaciers are growing while others nearby are receding. Generally, it is thought that Alaska's glaciers are gradually on the decrease.

A daily travel rate (forward movement) for a glacier of an inch or two is common, a foot or two is comparatively fast and 20 to 30 feet a day is rare and torrential.

TIDEWATER GLACIERS are those that reach the sea. They are generally quite active and discharge icebergs into the sea. There are only thirty of these left in the world today. Glacier Bay National Monument, Alaska, contains several tidewater glaciers, of which Muir is probably the most famous. It moves 20 to 30 feet a day which, with its sheer face rising 265 feet into the air, makes it a prolific producer of icebergs.

PIEDMONT GLACIERS fan out and terminate on a glacial moraine, sometimes only a short distance from the sea. Many were evidently tidewater glaciers at one time. Sometimes a lake is formed at the base when the moraine built by the glacier serves as a dam in the valley. Piedmont glaciers, which are relatively rare, are generally formed by the merging of several glacial streams.

Malaspina Glacier, Alaska's largest glacier, is an example of the piedmont type. Six large ice streams merge to form an immense ice plateau, larger than Rhode Island. Malaspina has a 25-square-mile forest with trees up to three feet in diameter growing on its back.

Mendenhall Glacier, a short driving distance from Juneau, is a beautiful glacier of the inland type. It is receding at the rate of 70 feet a year. This relatively rapid change makes it interesting to observe. Its beautiful lake at the base is used for ice skating in the winter and ice is harvested from the floating icebergs for freezing fish. (Glacier ice does not melt as rapidly as artificial ice because the air has been pressed out of it.)

Black Rapids Glacier, facing the Richardson Highway, some years ago moved forward three miles in less than five months. Sometimes inland glaciers come to life and move more rapidly. This is an average of 115 feet a day. It has since slowed down, but is still known as the "Galloping Glacier."

ALPINE GLACIERS are the most common type. There are literally thousands of these, severed in the past from the main icebody, which hang in high canyons on the mountains or travel down the valleys often coming below the timberline. Alaska has numerous small glaciers of this type, most of which have not been named.

ECONOMY

Gold mining, fish, and furs provided the early economic base of Alaska. Alaska's industry, now as in the past, is based on its natural resources.

THE FISHING INDUSTRY has long been Alaska's most valuable industry. Since the purchase of Alaska in 1867, the value of the fish harvest has exceeded 2 billion dollars. The most significant catches are, in order, salmon, king crab, halibut, shrimp, herring and herring roe, and dungeness crab.

FORESTRY: Alaska has 137 million acres of forest land. The most desirable timber is in the Tongass National Forest in Southeastern Alaska, the Chugach National Forest in the central coastal region near Anchorage, and on the Kenai Peninsula and Afognak Island. Alaska has an allowable annual harvest potential of 1,500 million board feet.

Alaska's two largest pulp mills are in Ketchikan and Sitka. Each are in operation 24 hours a day, producing more than 500 tons of pulp daily. Annual production is estimated at $60 million. Another large pulp mill is being planned for the Juneau area. Smaller mills are in operation at Wrangell, Haines, Petersburg, Seward, Anchorage, and Fairbanks.

MINING AND MINERALS: Alaska has 32 of 33 minerals rated strategic and critical by the federal government. Perhaps the most important of these is oil, recently discovered on the North Slope. This valuable mineral is in great demand all over the world, and will bring Alaska much attention and money in the years to come.

In the past gold led in production value, but today not so much of it is mined.

Minerals of more importance, other than oil, include gravel, coal, iron, copper, mercury, and tin.

Alaska has much potential as far as mining is concerned, for the vast majority of her minerals lay untouched.

AGRICULTURE: Alaska's agricultural possibilities are relatively undeveloped. The two principal farming areas are in the Matanuska Valley near Anchorage and the Tanana Valley near Fairbanks. Dairy products account for about 50 percent of the value of Alaska's farm products. Poultry, eggs, and livestock production is increasing rapidly. Other principal crops are potatoes, lettuce, cabbage, carrots, radishes, and celery.

TRAVEL INDUSTRY: The State's magnificent scenery and outdoor recreational opportunities are unequaled anywhere else in North America. And today, from the northern Arctic to the southeastern panhandle, accommodations and transportation facilities offer a variety of tours and itineraries to cover almost any time or money budget.

ALASKA'S GOVERNMENT

On September 13, 1955, the voters of Alaska elected fifty-five Alaskans to draft a proposed Constitution for what they hoped would some day be the state of Alaska. The delegates assembled on November 8, 1955, at the University of Alaska in College, Alaska, and worked for seventy-five days before adjourning.

The result of their labors, considered by many political scientists as perhaps the finest of all state constitutions, was ratified by Alaskans on April 24, 1956, and went into effect with the formal attainment of Statehood on January 3, 1959.

In keeping with one of its basic concepts, that of a strong executive branch, the Alaska Constitution provides that only two officials—the governor and the lieutenant governor—are elected in statewide balloting.

Nominees are selected in the normal manner at the primary election and each party's nominees run as a team in the general election with a vote for governor being considered as a vote for the same party's nominee for lieutenant governor. A governor may serve two successive four-year terms. In event of vacancy in the office, the lieutenant governor becomes governor.

WILLIAM A. EGAN, GOVERNOR

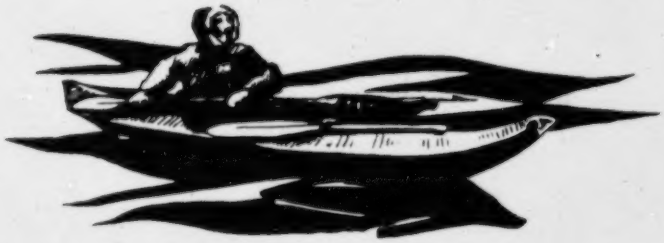
Under Alaska's Constitution, the governor is empowered to name the heads of all departments and the membership on boards and commissions, subject to confirmation by the legislature. There are sixteen principal departments: Administration, Commerce, Community and Regional Affairs, Economic Development, Education, Environmental Conservation, Fish and Game, Health and Social Services, Highways, Labor, Law, Military Affairs, Natural Resources, Public Safety, Public Works, and Revenue.

The state judiciary includes a three-member supreme court, a superior court with four districts and eight judges, and a series of magistrate and deputy magistrate courts. Judicial appointees are not subject to legislative confirmation but must be approved or rejected by the voters at stated intervals.

The state legislature consists of a senate of twenty members elected for four-year terms, and a forty-member house of representatives elected for two-year terms. The legislature meets annually and it may also be called into special session by the governor or by two-thirds of its members.

Alaska has two United States senators and one member of the U.S. House of Representatives, each with full voting privileges.

Other major provisions in Alaska's 12,000-word Constitution give the governor authority to veto or reduce individual items within an appropriation bill, prohibit the earmarking of state funds, require approval by the electorate before the state may contract debt for capital improvements, and require an automatic referendum at ten-year intervals on the question of calling a new Constitutional Convention.



THE ESKIMOS, INDIANS AND ALEUTS OF ALASKA

Alaska is still the last frontier in the minds of many Americans. Interest in the "Great Land" has increased sharply due to national publicity on the discovery of oil and Alaska's unique ecological situations. In spite of this great interest, many Americans know very little about the people of the largest state in the Union.

Of the total population of about 54,000 Eskimos and Indians, about 29,000 are Eskimos, 7,000 Aleuts, and 18,000 Indians. They live in widely separated villages which are scattered along the 33,000-mile coastline and the great rivers of Alaska. The village, varying in population from 30 to 1,000, is the unit rather than the tribe.

Alaskan Eskimos and Indians are citizens of the United States and of Alaska, having been naturalized collectively by the Citizenship Act of June 2, 1924. They are not

wards of the government. They are no longer a primitive people though many do hunt and fish for part of their food. Others are airplane pilots, welders, mechanics, carpenters, storekeepers, teachers, office workers, and state senators and representatives.

Where electricity is available, many Eskimo and Indian homes today have electrical appliances, especially among the Southeastern Indians. Oil is used extensively for heat. In remote northern sections with building materials scarce and freight high, houses are often built of driftwood and salvaged material. Mail-order jackets vie with handmade fur parkas.

The impact of twentieth century culture has brought about great changes among all of the Alaskan Indians and Eskimos. Some of the changes have been good, some are unfortunate. All over Alaska, people are undergoing a cultural transition to varying degrees. As a result, some Eskimo and Indian people still live much as their ancestors lived, while others have become outstanding members of the prevailing culture. In order to understand some of the problems faced by present-day Indian and Eskimo people, it is necessary to know something of their past.

In Alaska the Eskimo, Indian, and Aleut people lived within well defined regions, and there was little mixing of ethnic groups. As in any culture, the way of life was dictated by the abundance of food. In Southeastern Alaska the salmon, deer, and other plentiful foods permitted the Tlingits, Tsimpshians, and Haidas to settle in permanent villages and develop a culture rich in art. The Athapaskan Indians of the Alaskan interior, on the other hand, became wanderers following the migrating caribou herds and taking advantage of seasonal abundance of fish, waterfowl, and other game. The Eskimo people, like the Tlingits, depended upon the sea for life. However, a more hostile climate and fewer resources required a far different way of living.

SOUTHEASTERN ALASKA

Three Southeastern tribes lived in and around the Alexander Archipelago from Ketchikan to Katalla. Food was abundant enough so that these groups were able to live in permanent villages. The climate is warm in winter and cool in summer with precipitation from 50 to 200 inches. The terrain is characterized by rugged mountains, torrential rivers, craggy coasts, and dense forests. There are few flatlands and the region is poorly suited for agriculture.

Both Haidas and Tlingits were part of the totem culture that has attracted so much attention from all visitors to Alaska. These decorated poles are, in general, histories or records of the outstanding events in the life of a family or a clan. Totem carving originated among the Haidas. The Haidas are also noted for their fine slate carvings and the precise and delicate working of articles of wood, bone, and shell.

In addition, the Southeastern Alaska Indians carved and painted the fronts of their houses with elaborate designs and made wooden bowls and other beautiful carvings in bone, horn, or wood. They made many baskets, mainly from spruce root and grass fibers, nearly all of which were ornamented.

The Tlingits were and are commercially minded. They dominated the Interior Canadian Indians, indulging in sharp trade practices with them. The ceremonial blanket of the Tlingits, perfected by the Chilkats of Klukwan, is one of the most beautiful products of these gifted people. In great demand as an article of trade, it carried enormous prestige. The blanket was primarily intended as an adjunct to festivals and solemn occasions such as betrothals, weddings, and funerals.

Today, approximately 250 Haida Indians live in Hydaburg at the south end of the Prince of Wales Island. The village of Hydaburg is fairly modern with substantial frame houses. A cooperative salmon cannery, financed by the federal government, is run by the Hydaburg Cooperative Association. Individually, many of them are successful operators of power fishing boats, which they both build and use, and they take a lively interest in the life of the state.

Over 900 Tsimpshians now live in Metlakatla on Annette Island. They live a partly cooperative life running a salmon cannery, 4 fish traps, a water system, and a hydroelectric plant. Individually, they own fishing boats and operate stores in the village. A large, commercial landing field serving jet planes operates under lease on the island. Like all Southeastern people, they are primarily fishermen. They are well integrated into the life of the state and take part in the social, economic, and political life of the region.

INTERIOR AND SOUTHWESTERN ALASKA

Wide river valleys, rimmed with high mountains, are the home of the Athapaskan Indians of Alaska. Birch and black spruce grow along the rivers—the Yukon, the Kuskokwim, the Koyukuk, the Porcupine, the Tanana, and many others. This is a land of short, warm summers and long, cold winters when the temperature often plunges to 40 and 50 degrees below zero.

Before the advent of the white people, the Interior Alaskans were nomadic, following the moose and caribou, and there were no permanent villages. They developed no agriculture. Theirs was purely a hunting economy. When the game was plentiful, they thrived and when the game was scarce, the people starved. They were and are somewhat dependent on the river fish, especially the salmon.

The Aleuts (pronounced Al-ee-oot), a branch of the Eskimos, lived on the Alaska Peninsula. In this area the winters are somewhat colder than in Southeastern Alaska and the summers are cool. There is less precipitation, some 40 inches of rain and some fog. The few trees are mainly Aleutian brush, alder, and some aspens.

Salmon migrated to the rivers, caribou and bears wandered in the lowlands, and mountain sheep and goats were found on the higher mountains. The Aleutian Islands are on the main north-south flyway for migrating seabirds and the Aleuts benefited richly from them. The people lived in permanent villages. A sea-hunting culture was well developed but was surpassed by the Northern Eskimos.

The finest basketry produced in Alaska, if not in the world, was formerly made by the Aleut women of Attu Island. They were particularly skillful and painstaking, and fortunate, too, in having a type of grass on Attu Island better adapted for basket weaving than the grass that grows farther eastward in the Chain. The younger generation has not carried on the fine basket weaving of their ancestors, although some baskets are still made in the Aleutian Islands.

The Aleuts were very skillful sea hunters. In their single- or double-hatched light skin boats, they made long coastal voyages and often ventured far from shore in pursuit of sea otters, seals, sea lions, and even whales occasionally. Their weapons were light darts and spears cast with the throwing board.

Today the Aleuts live in well constructed frame houses. The majority are members of the Russian Orthodox Church. They fish commercially, many of them going to Bristol Bay to fish for the summer. Others work in canneries or operate boats. During the war many of them were highly successful military scouts, and they are often guides to expeditions at the present time.

WESTERN AND NORTHERN COASTS OF ALASKA

The Bering Sea and Arctic coastlines were the habitat of the Eskimos of Alaska. Windy, treeless wastes where temperatures are well below zero in winter, and hardly more than 50 degrees in the short, cold summer, present what seems to be an almost unsurmountable challenge to the ingenuity of man. Yet it was just this area that produced the remarkable culture that flourished about 2,000 years ago.

Living along the coast in permanent villages, the Eskimos would have scarcely survived had they not developed their sea and ice hunting to a marvelous degree. In this they were unsurpassed. With only the harpoon, in sturdy craft made of driftwood covered with skin, these people secured the 60-ton bowhead whale. Whales, seals, and walrus were the mainstay of their economy. Clothing was made entirely of skins from reindeer, ground squirrel, eider duck, cormorant, and murre. Alaskan Eskimos did not build snow igloos as did the Canadian Eskimos. Theirs were semi-subterranean homes of sod and wood.

The reindeer were introduced from Siberia at the suggestion of the Presbyterian missionary, Sheldon Jackson, at the turn of the century. Lapp herders also came with the reindeer and many of them settled and intermarried with the Eskimo. Reindeer roundups still take place. Every part of the animal is used—for food, clothing, skin-thread, or rawhide. The parka, an outer garment, is made like a large shirt or poncho and has an attached hood worn over the head or thrown back on the shoulders.

The Kayak is a one-hole, seaworthy skin canoe from 10 to 20 feet long and about 2 feet wide. It is made of seal or walrus skin tightly stretched over a framework of wood or bone, decked over except for the round hole in the middle in which the occupant sits. It is propelled by a double-bladed paddle.

Many Alaskan Eskimo villages today have well constructed frame houses sometimes heated by oil. The school is the center of activity—education, civic, and social. The Eskimo people enjoy being together, and have many community activities. They like festivities and stories. Visiting goes on at all times and often radios (usually battery sets) and phonographs are going full blast. The Eskimo Scout Battalions of the National Guard are an important part of village life. Where there are armories, these also serve as community buildings.

A THUMBNAIL HISTORY OF ALASKA

Alaska was discovered in 1741 by Russian explorers led by Vitus Bering, a Dane, who probed part of the vast coast. Russian fur traders colonized Kodiak, fortified Wrangell, and founded Sitka as their capital. Czar Alexander II sold the future state of the United States in 1867 for $7,200,000. The discovery of gold in Dawson (Yukon Territory, Canada), Nome, and the Yukon-Tanana valleys at the turn of the century brought hundreds of thousands north and in 1912 Alaska was granted territorial status.

World War II emphasized Alaska's strategic world military position and since that time it has remained a vital segment in our nation's national defense system. On June 30, 1958, after a long battle for statehood, Congress approved legislation which would make Alaska the 49th state. The legislation was signed by the President on July 7 and ratified by Alaska's voters in November. On January 3, 1959, President Dwight Eisenhower officially proclaimed Alaska a state of the Union.

HISTORIC MILESTONES

1728	Vitus Bering, a Danish explorer employed by Russia, sighted and named St. Lawrence Island. He proved that the continents of Asia and North America were separated by water–the Bering Strait.
1778	James Cook of England made the first comprehensive survey of the Alaskan coast.
1784	The first Russian settlement in Alaska was established on Kodiak Island at Three Saints Bay by Grigor Shelikof.
March 30, 1867	Purchase treaty with Russia signed.
August 17, 1880	Gold discovered by Joe Juneau and Dick Harris at Juneau.
1884	The first capital of Alaska was established in Sitka.
September 22, 1898	Gold had been discovered and tents pitched at mouth of Snake River, present site of Nome.
1912	The capital of Alaska was transferred to Juneau and the wilderness that was then known as Alaska was officially organized into the Territory of Alaska.
March 3, 1913	First Territorial Legislature assembled in Juneau–8 senators, 16 representatives.
March 30, 1916	Judge James Wickersham, non-voting delegate to Congress, chose this anniversary date to introduce the first Statehood Bill.
July 17, 1923	President Harding drove a golden spike to mark the opening of the Alaska Railroad.
January 3, 1959	The President proclaimed Alaska the 49th state.

ALASKA'S FLAG

Eight stars of gold on a field of blue –
Alaska's flag. May it mean to you
The blue of the sea, the evening sky,
The mountain lakes, the flow'rs nearby;
The gold of the early sourdough's dreams,
The precious gold of the hills and streams;
The brilliant stars in the northern sky,
The "Bear" – the "Dipper" – and, shining high,
The great North Star with its steady light,
Over land and sea a beacon bright.
Alaska's flag – to Alaskans dear,
The simple flag of a last frontier.

– Marie Drake

THE STORY OF ALASKA'S FLAG

In 1926 the American Legion, Department of Alaska, conducted a contest in the Alaska public schools for designing a flag for Alaska. The design of Benny Benson, a 13-year-old orphaned schoolboy of the Jesse Lee Mission Home at Seward, was chosen winner. Accompanying his design, he wrote:

"The blue field is for the Alaska sky and the Forget-Me-Not, an Alaska flower. The North Star is for the future state of Alaska, the most northerly of the Union. The Dipper is for the Great Bear–symbolizing strength."

The poem "Alaska's Flag" was written by Marie Drake and set to music by Elinor Dusenbury. In 1955, it was designated Alaska's official song.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Physical Features

AREA:	586,400 square miles; 2 1/2 times the size of Texas.
COASTLINE:	33,904 miles; exceeds all United States coasts combined.
LATITUDE:	52 degrees to 72 degrees north; comparable to Scandinavia.
RIVERS:	Yukon (2,000 miles long), Kuskokwim, Tanana, Colville, Koyukuk, Susitna, many others.
MOUNTAINS:	McKinley, 20,320 feet, highest in North America.
GLACIERS:	Cover 18,000 square miles.

Climate

SOUTHERN COAST:	Mild! Annual mean temperature 40 degrees; rainy, 50 to 230 inches a year.
INTERIOR:	Temperature extremes, 76 degrees below zero to 100 degrees above; short growing season; dry, 16 to 18 inches precipitation.
ARCTIC:	Cool, 18 degrees below, in January, 40 degrees above in July; arid, 5 inches precipitation annually.

Forests

AREA:	43,060 square miles on coasts, 342,409 square miles in interior.
VOLUME:	270 billion board feet commercial timber.
ANNUAL TIMER CUT:	276,000,000.
SPECIES:	Hemlock, spruce, cedar, birch.
UTILIZATION:	Lumber, shingles, fuel, pulp, plywood, specialty products.

Wildlife

GAME:	Brown, grizzly, and black bear; moose, mountain sheep, goat, caribou, numerous fur bearers. (Reindeer is domesticated animal.)
BIRDS:	All waterfowl, ptarmigan, grouse.
FISH:	World's largest rainbow trout and salmon; grayling, dolly varden; cutthroat and lake trout, shellfish, halibut, cod, king crab, shrimp.

INFORMATION SOURCES

Agriculture
Alaska Department of Natural Resources
Division of Agriculture
Box 800
Palmer, Alaska 99645

Alaska Highway
Alaska Department of Highways
Box 1467
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Alaska Information in Japan
Alaska Far-East Trade & Information
Akiyama Building—Fifth Floor
No. 25, Akefune-Cho
Shiba Nishikubo, Minato-Ku
Tokyo, Japan
Cable: LOOK NORTH

Alaska Marine Highway System (Ferryliners)
Department of Public Works
Division of Marine Transportation
Pouch R
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Alaska Railroad
General Manager
Alaska Railroad
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Education
Department of Education
Alaska Office Building
Pouch F
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Fish, Furs & Wildlife
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Subport Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801

U.S. Bureau of Commercial Fisheries
Box 1668
Juneau, Alaska 99801

General Business
Alaska State Chamber of Commerce
208 National Bank of Alaska Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801
and Reed Building
608 Fourth Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Job Opportunities and Living Costs
Alaska Department of Labor
Box 1149
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Lands and Forests
U.S. Forest Service
Regional Office
Box 1628
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Alaska Department of Natural Resources
Division of Lands
344 Sixth Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Bureau of Land Management
555 Cordova Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Minerals
Alaska Department of Natural Resources
Division of Mines and Minerals
Box 5—300
College, Alaska 99701

U.S. Geological Survey
508 Second Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

U.S. Bureau of Mines
Box 550
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Tourism, Travel & Conventions
Alaska Travel Division
Pouch E
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Alaska Visitors Association
Anchorage-Westward Hotel
Suite L-65
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

MORE ALASKA INFORMATION

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

SOME BOOKS ABOUT ALASKA	Pouch G Alaska State Library Juneau, Alaska 99801
BARANOF BOOK LIST	Baranof Book Shop & Lending Library 223 Seward Juneau, Alaska 99801

BROCHURES

ALASKAN CITIES	Chambers of Commerce (Write to the individual city in which you are interested)
CURRENT LISTING OF ALASKA BROCHURES	Superintendent of Documents U.S. Government Printing Office Washington, D. C. 20025

MAPS

MAPS OF ALASKA	Department of Economic Development Division of Travel Pouch E Juneau, Alaska 99801
	Standard Oil Company (Write to the regional office nearest you)
	Union Oil Company (Write to the regional office nearest you)

FILMS AND FILMSTRIPS

EXCLUSIVELY ALASKAN FILMS	Northern Films Box 98 Main Office Station Seattle, Washington
CURRENT LISTING OF ALASKA FILMS	Dick Norman Pictures, Inc. 811 – 8th Avenue Anchorage, Alaska 99501
CURRENT LISTING OF ALASKA FILMS	Encyclopaedia Britannica Films 10312 S. E. 25th Street Bellevue, Washington 98004 Attention: Dick Fisher